THE BIBLE
ON
BAPTISM.

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THE

BIBLE ON BAPTISM;

OR,

THE SCRIPTURE DIRECTORY TO BAPTISM.

A FAITHFUL CITATION OF THE PRINCIPAL PASSAGES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, WHICH RELATE TO THE MODE OF ADMINISTERING THIS ORDINANCE;

WITH THE SACRED TEXT

IMPARTIALLY EXAMINED, AND THE PLAIN, OBVIOUS MEANING EXHIBITED TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF EVERY ONE WHO IS WILLING TO KNOW THE TRUTH.

BY A LAYMAN.
(Oliver Smith.)

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the Scriptures* daily, whether these things were so.—ACTS xvii. 11.

Whatever pretends to exceed the direction of the Word, may safely be rejected; and cannot safely be admitted.—DR. OWEN.

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NOTE.

THIS little work was prepared, and, more than thirty years since, published, by a lay member of one of the Presbyterian churches of Philadelphia. In it the author, who has since gone to his rest, seeks, by actual citation, to gather together the texts of Scripture having a direct reference to *Baptism*, and to give the reader an opportunity of ascertaining what THE WORD OF GOD says on that subject. "In a few notes," he remarks, "I have humbly endeavored to point out what appears to be taught in these passages. In these notes, I have written under the impression of my accountability to the righteous Judge, and am not conscious that I have, in any place, given a sense different from what was intended by the Holy Spirit. The reader is exhorted, how-

ever, to allow his mind to be influenced by the word of God alone."

The work has been revised and abridged. The notes, though not from the pen of a practised writer, are forcible and intelligible, and well adapted to counteract the unfounded assertions by which young Christians are often assailed and troubled. To our Baptist friends we commend the perusal of these texts, with or without the notes.

THE

BIBLE ON BAPTISM.

I. Introductory.

The gospel is intended for fallen creatures. As we have broken God's law, and have become depraved, we need two things, and only two, to raise us up to love God and fit us for his service and enjoyment. These two things are the forgiveness of sins and regeneration, as effected by the operation of the Holy Spirit. These two great truths are taught constantly, not only by the Bible in words, but also *symbolically* in the various ordinances which God has instituted, at different times, for the observance of his people.

Every ordinance which God has ever instituted in his church is full of *meaning*, intended to convey some valuable instruction, some important truth, or to keep in mind some important event.

When Adam and Eve transgressed his law, by eating the forbidden fruit, God did not inflict upon them the penalty of eternal death at *once*, (which he very justly might have done,) but was pleased to preach repentance and faith to them in the garden, and to promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." And, further, to *keep this in mind*, he instituted sacrifices of clean animals, to point their faith to the LAMB OF GOD, the great sacrifice for sin, and thus early to teach them, that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

I. CIRCUMCISION AND SACRIFICES.

Circumcision.—And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. . . . And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, TO BE A GOD unto thee and to thy seed after thee. . . . This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be A TOKEN of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in your

house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that *is* bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.—Genesis xvii. 1–14.

Here we have the origin of the rite of circumcision. It was a most important rite, and appointed by God himself as a token of a covenant made with Abraham, the father of all believers.

It was also a bloody rite: it not only signified the putting off the sins of the flesh, but represented an *internal work* of the Holy Spirit upon the heart; as the Bible in one place says, "a circumcision made without hands."

It was also a profession of separation from the rest of the world,—a token that the person circumcised was set apart for the Lord's service, and to show forth his glory.

This rite was continued from Abraham to his posterity, down through all their generations, until Christ; when the Jews who believed in Christ discontinued it and exchanged it for baptism; but the Jews who rejected Christ continue it to this day.

Levitical Sacrifices.—When God appeared, to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, he instituted the Passover. He directed the Jews to take a lamb for each family, to kill it, and then

> Take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood of the lamb that *is* in the basin, and strike (*or sprinkle*) the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that *is* in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.—Exodus xii. 22, 23.
>
> *Ceremony of Sacrificing.*—And Moses took half of the blood, and put *it* in basins; and half of the blood he SPRINKLED on the altar: . . . and Moses took the blood, and SPRINKLED it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.—Exod. xxiv. 6, 8.

When we examine the various sacrifices which were instituted by Moses at the command of God himself, we find that on almost all occasions the priest took part of the blood of the victim offered, and *sprinkled* it round about the altar, and upon the person who offered; and then he *poured* the remainder down at the bottom of the altar.

In all the various kinds of sacrifices and

offerings, we never hear any thing of the *dipping* or *immersion* of the person or object represented in the sacrifice or offering, nor of any kind of ceremony which could possibly signify, or lead any person to think of it; but it is all *sprinkling* and *pouring*, *sprinkling* and *pouring*.

Design of Sacrifices.—When Aaron, or any priest or king, was to be consecrated or anointed to his office, it was always done by pouring oil upon his head, as well as sprinkling the blood upon him. The oil was to signify the descent or pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon him, to renew and sanctify and cleanse his heart; the blood to show forth the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ.

By consulting the Scriptures it will most abundantly appear, that these two great truths are to be learned by them; in every part of the Bible the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit is always compared to *pouring out* water or *rain*, and never, in any one place, to any thing like *dipping*. And invariably the blessing is said to be *applied to the person*, and not the person *applied to the blessing*.

The Scripture nowhere speaks of dipping

people into the Holy Ghost, or of dipping them into the blood of Christ.

On the contrary, all the Jewish sacrifices, and all the anointings of the stones, and kings, and priests, and prophets, were performed by sprinkling the blood and pouring out the oil. I will cite a few passages.

And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and POUR IT upon his head, and anoint him. Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and SPRINKLE it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and SPRINKLE the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that *is* upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and SPRINKLE *it* upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him; and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. Exodus xxix. 4, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21. See also Exodus xl. 9, 15.

And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any

man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and SPRINKLE the blood round about upon the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if his offering be of the flocks, *namely*, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall SPRINKLE *his blood* round about upon the altar.—Leviticus i. 1–11.

See also Lev. iii. 2, 8, 13; iv. 6, 17, 25, 30, 34; v. 9; vii. 2, 14; viii. 10, 12, 15, 19, 24, 30; ix. 18; xiv. 7; xvi. 14, 15, 19. Also Numbers xix. 14, 21; Deut. xii. 16, 24; xv. 23.

From all which passages, and many more, it is plain that whenever *God himself* speaks of purging, purifying, cleansing, or sanctifying any thing, he always speaks of *sprinkling* or *pouring out* water, or oil, or blood, or the Holy Spirit, *upon them;* and never by *dipping* them into water, oil, or blood, or *dipping* them *into* the Holy Ghost.

II. PREDICTIONS ILLUSTRATING THE SUBJECT.

He shall come down LIKE RAIN UPON THE MOWN GRASS; AS SHOWERS THAT WATER THE EARTH.—Psalm lxxii.

The palaces shall be forsaken, the multitude of the city

shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens forever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks, UNTIL THE SPIRIT BE POURED UPON US FROM ON HIGH, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.—Isaiah xxxii. 14, 15.

For I WILL POUR WATER upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will POUR MY SPIRIT upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.—Isaiah xliv. 3.

And in the fifty-second chapter of Isaiah (where the Ethiopian eunuch was reading when Philip found him and baptized him) it is distinctly declared and predicted of Christ that, when he came in the flesh, he should SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS.

And God declared by the prophet Ezekiel, that he would do the same thing for his people upon their return from among the heathen, when he says:—

Then will I SPRINKLE clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.—Ezekiel xxxvi. 25. And by the same prophet God says, Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I HAVE POURED OUT MY SPIRIT upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.—Ezekiel xxxix. 29. Again, by the prophet Joel, God says: And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will POUR OUT MY SPIRIT upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and

upon the handmaids in those days will I POUR OUT MY SPIRIT.—Joel ii. 28, 29. And by Zechariah, God says: I will POUR upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.—Zechariah xii. 10.

And so Malachi iii. 10.

Pray, when are these predictions to be fulfilled, if not in gospel days?

Now, here are not only allusions of the strongest kind, but express and positive predictions of God himself, to show the exact mode in which BAPTISM should be administered; for the atoning, pardoning efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is everywhere compared to the *pouring out* or *sprinkling* clean water upon the persons.

And as the Jews used sacrifices until the time of Christ, in which the sprinkling and pouring out of the blood still continued, how could they ever have thought it most proper to *dip* a person into water, to supply the place of *sprinkling* and *pouring* the blood?

Would it not have been naturally expected by everybody (who understood any thing about the TWO GREAT TRUTHS taught in their sacrifices and anointings) that when sacrifices

were ended, and water was substituted for the blood and the oil, some mode would be employed still to signify the same things by the application of water?

Who would ever have supposed that dipping the subject into water could be understood by the Jews, when their prophets had always represented the blessings of the gospel by sprinkling and pouring? And they had never heard or learned, from the law or the prophets, any thing about dipping into the blood of Christ, or dipping into the Holy Ghost?

If dipping had been attempted, many objections would have arisen and much opposition been made; but we hear nothing of all this. These reasons alone would render it highly probable that neither John the Baptist nor the apostles ever practised dipping under water for baptism.

John's Baptizing the Jews,

(*Before the beginning of our Lord's ministry.*)

The first place of Scripture where the ordinance of baptism is found, describes the mission, preaching, and baptizing of John, the harbinger of Christ. As all the four evangel-

ists have given us some account of John and his practice, I shall take the fullest information from them all, and present it to the reader in its proper connection. The following collection and disposition of passages will afford us, I conceive, a complete account in the pure words of Scripture.

The divine mission of John, and the design of it.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.—Mark i. 1.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. —John i. 6.

As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.—Mark i. 2.

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.—Matt. iii. 3.

And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him; . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.—Luke i. 16, 17.

Now . . . the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.—Luke iii. 1, 2.

John's preaching, as to the grand theme of it.

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Matt. iii. 1, 2.

And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. —Luke iii. 3.

John preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.—Acts xiii. 24; xix. 4.

John's baptizing. He informed his hearers that God had sent him not to preach only, but to baptize with water.—John i. 33.

And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.—Mark i. 5.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.—Matt. iii. 7–11.

Signification of John's Baptism.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.—Matt. iii. 11, 12.

For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.—Acts i. 5.

Mode of John's Baptism.

One thing can be made very plain: that it *never could have been* by *immersion.*

1. Such a mode would have been without significance. When John says, "I indeed baptize with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" he made allusions which were both intelligible and striking to his hearers. But if he had been immersing them, it would read thus: "I indeed baptize you by *dipping you into* the water; but he that cometh after me shall baptize you by *pouring out* the Holy Ghost upon you." The mode is so very different, that all the force of the allusion is lost. For men are never dipped into the Holy Ghost, or applied to the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost is always sprinkled, shed, or poured out. And, therefore, for John to have immersed the people would not have represented the blessing intended to be signified at all. It would have exhibited nothing like it, and would have been an emblem without any expression—a symbol of no significancy. And there could not have been any allusion to Christ's death

then, for he was not dead, and the people did not expect him to die.

2. It would have been a manifest departure from the symbols then in use, and from those pointed out in the language of prophecy; for these are all sprinkling and pouring. How would John's language have sounded to the people, and how would his practice have struck their minds? Would they not have objected, and asked to know the reasons of this *glaring departure* from the old established mode of *sprinkling* and *pouring?* and would they not have pointed out the incongruity of a mode entirely destitute of meaning? For it is not pretended that Christ had been buried at this time.

But if John in fact baptized by *sprinkling* and *pouring* the water, (as we suppose he did,) then the phraseology which John used would be perfectly straight, and the whole subject *easily understood* by them.

It was as if he had said, "I indeed baptize you by sprinkling and pouring the water upon you; but there cometh one after me who is mightier than I: he shall baptize you by shedding or pouring the Holy Spirit upon you."

3. As great multitudes were baptized by John, there is a most serious improbability in the way of his immersing them, on the score of physical possibility. Since it is said that "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out and were baptized of him," the number of the baptized must, on any explanation, have been very great.

The writer, to satisfy himself on this point, asked an eminent physician (entirely disinterested on this question) with regard to the ability of a man to endure the fatigue of immersion. He took a little time to consider, and returned for answer: 1. That he had witnessed the ceremony several times. And, 2. That he did not believe the most muscular man of his acquaintance could dip one hundred persons in a day, and stand the fatigue one month. And a moment's consideration must convince every one that he was correct. For when a person is dipped, he walks down into the water, the operator takes hold of him before, by clasping one hand in a band tied round him, and puts the other hand under his back; then throws him backward into the water, and dips him all under the

water, and then lifts him up again by main strength, and sets him upon his feet.

A gentleman of veracity told the writer, that he was once present when forty-seven were dipped in one day, in the usual way. The first operator began and went through the ceremony until he had dipped twenty-five persons, when he was so fatigued that he was compelled to give it up to the other, who with great apparent difficulty dipped the other twenty-two. Both appeared completely exhausted, and went off the ground into a house hard by, to change their clothes and refresh themselves.

Baptizing in Jordan.

But why, it is asked, unless immersion was practised, go to Jordan, or to "Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there"? The reason is a very simple one. Water in quantity is absolutely necessary when a large multitude come from a distance and encamp; as must have been the case with those who went into the wilderness to John.

But, if the only object in view was to dip them one by one, a large river, like the Jordan, would not be necessary. A very small

stream, a brook, ten feet wide and three feet deep, would answer a *great deal better*. To say that a great river like Jordan was necessary on *that* account, is a very *foolish reason*, and has absurdity on the very face of it.

In the great camp-meetings that take place nowadays, they always fix upon some place where *water* is easily obtained for the horses, &c. If our Methodist brethren should advertise that on a certain week they were to have a camp-meeting in a certain place, where they expected many thousands of people, and that they had located it near some large stream of water, would anybody think from that circumstance that they meant to dip people? Would not the reason be obvious to every person why such a place was chosen?

On the supposition that John had immersed the immense multitudes of which mention is made, what possible analogy could there be between such a mode and the blessings intended to be represented by it? If the mode was an exhibition of the work of the Spirit, then *dipping was not such an exhibition*, for the Spirit's work is uniformly represented by *sprinkling* and *pouring*. And, besides, the Spirit is said to be *applied to the subject;* but,

in dipping, the subject is applied to the water, and not the water to the subject; and consequently, if John did dip or immerse people, he must have acted in a most inconsistent and absurd manner. *At this time*, no one thought about the burial of Christ, for he was not dead.

III. The Baptism of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord's baptism we next find immediately following the above account of John. The infinite dignity of the person baptized attaches to it infinite interest and weight. The following is the fullest account given us.

Matt. iii. 13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. Mark i. 9. And—JESUS—was baptized of John in Jordan. Matt. iii. 16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water. Mark i. 10. And—coming up out of the water, Luke iii. 21, and praying, the heaven was opened. 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. 23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.

John i. 32. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode

upon him. 33 And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

What, my pious reader, can we say of the subject of baptism in this case? What an honor is here attached to this ordinance, and consequently to all that piously follow the example of the Redeemer in it!

Here we have the whole account of the baptism of Christ: and these passages are often quoted to prove that Christ was dipped or immersed in the water of the Jordan, merely because it was said, "He went up straightway out of the water," and "coming up out of the water;" as if it was impossible for a person to come up out of the water unless he had been *all over under water.*

But here nothing took place, no circumstance whatever is related, but what was equally proper and necessary to describe his baptism, if it was done (as we suppose) by his stepping down a little way into the water, and John *pouring the water upon his head.*

And although we believe that in common baptisms John made use of *sprinkling*, yet

here we think it probable that he *poured the water* upon his head.

1. Because prophets, priests, and kings were always consecrated to their several offices by solemnly *pouring the oil upon their heads.* The priests, in particular, were consecrated and anointed with oil when they were thirty years of age; and here it is *expressly* mentioned of Christ, that "*he began to be about thirty years of age:*" as if the Holy Ghost intended to inform us here of the reason why Christ was baptized at this time; and that the water was poured out upon his head, to signify his being anointed a priest.

2. Because the name "Christ," and "Messiah," by which he was called, signifies "anointed," the anointed one.

3. Because at this same time the Spirit was actually *poured out upon him;* but he was *not dipped* into the Spirit.

4. Because the prophet Isaiah prophesied that Christ should be "anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted," &c.—Isaiah lxi. 1. Which prophecy Christ particularly applied to himself.—Luke iv. 21.

Now, we know that, being of the tribe of

Judah, he could never have been consecrated and anointed as priest by any of the priests at Jerusalem. And if this was not *the time* when he was anointed a prophet, priest, and king, we cannot find any other place where it was ever done. And if John, to "fulfil all righteousness," anointed Christ at this time to these sacred offices, it does not seem very probable that he did it by dipping him, which would signify *nothing at all;* but it was done by pouring the water upon his head, to represent the pouring of the oil by the priests, and also the *descent* of the Holy Spirit; and at the same time the Holy Spirit did actually *descend* in the form of a dove, and sat upon him.

Now, we cannot suppose that he was dipped to represent his burial, for he was not yet dead; and if his burial was not represented by it, then it must have been either to represent his induction to the priest's office, or the descent of the Holy Spirit; or there can be no meaning in it.

IV. Christ Baptizing,

(*By his disciples, in Galilee and Judea.*)

This is the only mention of baptizing by our Lord or his disciples during his personal pre-

sence with them, and consequently it claims our very serious attention.

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea: and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him. 27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.—John iii. 22–30.

When, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.—John iv. 1–3.

The import of this passage is simply this: Jesus and his disciples had been preaching and baptizing in Galilee; and great numbers resorted to him; so that it was *reported* to the Pharisees that he had made and baptized more disciples than John had in Judea, Jerusalem, &c. He came out of Galilee a *short time* into Judea, and baptized a few persons, but probably found a *very few* who had not been baptized by John; and there he heard the reports of the Pharisees, upon which he departed again into Galilee.

There is nothing here to determine the *mode* in which this ordinance was performed, nor what description of persons were baptized. They were principally Galileans, and undoubtedly the same description of persons as before mentioned. There is, however, no mention of any large river; nor was there probably any need of it. There were nowhere such large collections of people, with their camels, horses, and asses, as to render an encampment near convenient watering-places necessary, as was the case when John baptized. Our Saviour probably went with his disciples from village to village, and baptized, sometimes in their houses, and sometimes in the open air, and under the shade of the trees; but we have no account in all these passages that any persons were ever *dipped* in water, or that Christ or his disciples ever went near any river. And it is very remarkable, if immersion is the only mode of baptism, and is so important, that there is *no account* in any place that Christ or his disciples *ever dipped any persons.*

V. John's Last Baptizing in Enon.

The next passage we find on this subject is contained in a very few words. It is, however, a passage which has been thought of considerable weight as to our inquiry.

John iii. 23. And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they, came and were baptized.

This passage has been much relied upon by our brethren the Baptists, to prove dipping or immersion. For why, say they, should John choose such a place "because there *was much water there*," if it was not for the purpose of dipping them?

But a moment's examination and reflection will show that this is an illusion; and that if the *only thing* wanted was a convenient place to dip them, much water, or *many waters*, (as the original is,) WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY: for (as we said before) a *very small stream* or brook of clear water, not more than eight or ten feet wide, and three or four feet deep, would answer just as well. But a collection or encampment of many thousands of people, with their camels, and horses, and asses, from all parts of the country, would indeed *require*

a place near some convenient streams of water, where they could lead them to water several times a day, that they might not suffer and die of thirst. This was undoubtedly the *true reason,* and was a good reason; and not for the purpose of *dipping* them.

John's baptism could not have been designed to represent Christ's burial, for he was *not yet dead.* It must have been to represent the *pouring out* the Spirit of God, which could only have been by *sprinkling* or *pouring,* and could not have been represented by *dipping.*

VI. General Account of John's Success.

Luke vii. 29. And all the people that heard *him,* and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. 35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

There is nothing here expressive of *the mode* of baptism.

VII. Christ Represents his Sufferings under the Figure of a Baptism.

(*See Mark* x. 35 *and* 40, *and*)

Matt. xx. 22. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I

shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

Luke xii. 50. But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

Here is another confirmation of our opinion as to the MODE of Christian baptism. Christ here calls his sufferings and death "a baptism;" and with the most beautiful propriety.

The prophet Isaiah, liii. 12, represented Christ's sufferings by the words "he hath *poured out his soul* unto death." God also *poured out* his indignation and wrath *upon him.* When it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he put him to grief, and made his soul an offering for sin.

> And justice *pour'd upon his head*
> Its weighty vengeance, in our stead.

This mode of speaking is very frequent in Scripture, to express *the sufferings* of those who fall under the wrath of God due for sin. See Jeremiah vii. 20: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be *poured out upon* this place," &c. Also, Ezekiel vii. 8: "Now will I shortly *pour*

out my fury upon thee." See also Ezekiel xiv. 19, xx. 8, 13, 21; also, xxx. 15. Jer. x. 25. Psalm lxix. 24; lxxix. 6. Nahum i. 6. Job xx. 23.

In the Garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross were the vials of divine justice poured out upon him. There too did water and blood pour forth from his pierced side, emblems of atonement and sanctification, prefiguring the teachings of the two sacraments, the Lord's supper and baptism.

> My Saviour's pierced side
> Pour'd out a double flood:
> By water we are purified,
> And pardon'd by the blood."

Christ told the sons of Zebedee that they should be baptized with the baptism he was baptized with; that is, be partakers of his sufferings: and so they were, some time afterwards.

VIII. Christian Baptism.

Baptism, it is evident, was instituted long before the following commission was delivered to the apostles. It was instituted by God, and enjoined on John, the forerunner of Christ, as a part of the work to which he was especially called. Hence, when speaking of the Father,

he describes him by this very circumstance: "He that sent me to baptize with water." John i. 33. Our Saviour also had directed his disciples to baptize such persons as should receive his word, when he commenced his public ministry; (see § III. p. 22:) but he delayed the *full* and *formal* institution of Christian baptism till he was risen from the dead, when he united it with his last most solemn charge, given by Matthew and Mark, in the following verses:—

Matt. xxviii. 16. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world.

Mark xvi. 15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 19 So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

How solemn and interesting was this occasion! The Redeemer had undergone the "baptism" of his sufferings last described. The

wrath of God had been poured out upon him. He had been crucified, and the blood had been made to pour down from his hands, his feet, and his side; and, after the bitter cry and agony, he had given up the ghost. But now he is risen triumphant, and about to ascend to glory. He had appointed his disciples to meet him on a mountain of Galilee, where he was to give the important charge, and commission, contained in the verses above. The solemn hour is come; we may be assured the disciples are eager to catch every word from their ascending Lord, and that he would give them his directions in the *plainest language possible.* He begins by encouraging their sorrowful minds with a view of his supreme power in heaven and earth; in heaven to give them the Holy Spirit, to employ angels in their behalf; and, finally, to bestow the kingdom of heaven upon them.

So also he had, to fulfil the prophecy recorded in Isaiah and Ezekiel, TO "SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS," and to "SPRINKLE CLEAN WATER UPON THEM."

You may be sure he would not forget this important business. Accordingly, *he here* commands his disciples to go into all the world,

and teach ALL NATIONS, *baptizing* (or SPRINKLING them, as the prophets had said he would) in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

In *this way*, and this only, could this prophecy *ever be fulfilled;* and if this is not the meaning of this scripture, and the fulfilment of these prophecies, we should like to have our brethren tell us (if they can) when and where and how this is ever to be done.

IX. The Acts of the Apostles.

We have now read and examined, as far as our limits would admit, all the passages of the four Gospels that relate to our inquiry. We have found the example, the practice, and the command of Christ on this subject, and the most striking allusions; but nowhere can we find any command, example, or practice of dipping or immersion.

We have next to examine the Acts of the Apostles, to ascertain by *the practice* of the disciples how they understood the command of their Lord; so that if we have any way mistaken his commands, their obedience and practice will most certainly correct our error; and on the contrary, if we have rightly under-

stood his word, their practice will confirm our opinions.

"The penman of this scripture," the Assembly of Divines, in their argument to it, assure us, "was Luke the Evangelist, (as appears from the first words of it,) for the most part an eye-witness to the things he records, being constantly a fellow-laborer with Paul. His purpose," they add, "in writing this narrative, was, as he intimates in his first preface, that the Church might have the *certain knowledge* of Christ, his gospel, and kingdom; that our faith might not be built on the uncertain reports of pretenders to truth." Hence, admitting the writer to be a faithful and pious historian, and writing purposely for the direction of the people of God ever after, and, above all, under the influence of the Spirit of God, we may safely rely, not only on the accuracy of the accounts, but on the fulness and sufficiency of the information to answer his professed purpose.

We have here recorded NINE INSTANCES of the administration of baptism. If, therefore, as above stated, we have misunderstood the Saviour's commission, the apostles certainly did not; and hence by their obedience to it

we shall find an infallible interpretation of his will.

And first let us see what MODE they might naturally have expected after all this; and from our Saviour's words, when he promised the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which they should receive on the day of Pentecost.

Acts i. 4, 5. And [Jesus] being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Now, would our blessed Saviour have traced any resemblance between the two baptisms, if one had been by *dipping?* If dipping had been the practice, he would have said, "John truly baptized by *dipping* people into the water; but when God comes to baptize them, his way is very different: it is to *pour out his Spirit upon them.*" But if John baptized by *sprinkling* and *pouring* water, (as we believe he did,) Christ's language was perfectly intelligible, and it seems they understood him, and did not ask any explanation. "And so it came to pass on the day of Pentecost, the

Spirit was poured out upon them, as Jesus had said."

Acts ii. 1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and IT SAT UPON EACH OF THEM. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will POUR OUT in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Here we see the fulfilment of our Saviour's

promise, and prediction. As John had baptized them by *sprinkling* or *pouring water upon them* to signify the atonement or forgiveness of sins and sanctification by the Holy Ghost, so here (as their sins had already been forgiven) the Holy Ghost was *poured out* upon them, to sanctify them, and fit them for the arduous work committed to them; the Spirit was "*shed on them* abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Titus iii. 7. Now, if John had used *dipping* in his baptism, we can see no kind of meaning in it, nor any truth of any importance to be signified by it.

But, in the true way, there is a beautiful propriety in the whole ceremony; for whenever baptism is properly administered, it brings to mind (by the pouring and the sprinkling of water) our dependence upon the influence of the Holy Spirit to enlighten, convince, convert, and sanctify the soul; and so, when the Lord's Supper is administered, it is to show forth the death of Christ till he come, and to show that as bread is broken in pieces, so his body was broken for us; and when the wine is poured out, it represents his blood shed and *poured out* for us. These are the *only two* sacraments of the Christian church;

there are no others. The one, to signify the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ; the other, sanctification by the Holy Ghost. And if there be not a very great sin in this innovation, there certainly can be no propriety in introducing a *new Sacrament*, to represent the *burial of Christ*, which is of no more importance than his crucifixion, or circumcision, or presentation at the Temple, or any other circumstance of his life. The *shedding of his blood* at his death is the only thing made use of by the Holy Ghost, and prefigured by all the sacrifices in the Jewish church, to point out the great doctrine of the atonement, and to show that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission or forgiveness of sins.

X. The Baptism at Pentecost.

Ten days after the ascension, when the apostles and disciples were together at Jerusalem, it pleased God to accomplish the promise of pouring forth upon them the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. By this divine power, they all were enabled to speak in different languages to the multitude then assembled at Jerusalem from different nations; so that

every one heard in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. Some having spoken dishonorably of the disciples, Peter stands forth to defend them; after which he delivers to the multitude a discourse, in which he charges the Jews with having crucified the Lord of glory; but that God had raised him from the dead and exalted him to his right hand, as the only Lord and Christ. Upon this follow the verses relating to the ordinance.

Acts ii. 37. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

Here we have an account of the baptism of *three thousand persons* at one time and in one place, and that in part of a day.

After a statement of the discourse of Peter to the Jews, delivered on the morning of this day, the sacred historian adds, "With many other words did he testify and exhort" the multitude. "THEN they that gladly received

his word were baptized" immediately, on the spot. How many of them? About three thousand. To believe that they were baptized by sprinkling or pouring involves no difficulty. Near the door of Jewish houses water-pots were customarily kept, (see John iii. 6,) which could readily have served for this occasion. But to suppose that three thousand persons were IMMERSED in *Jerusalem* in one day, is, to any one familiar with Jerusalem as a city, or its arrangements for water, simply absurd. If the sacred historian desired to have the impression made upon the readers of the Bible that these persons were immersed, is it not strange, to say the least, that no hint is given which would countenance the notion? Where were they immersed? How long would the ceremony have taken the disciples if there had been a place in which even two or three could have been immersing at once? (See Section II.)

Not a hint is given to countenance this idea of the immersion of the three thousand. Every probability is against it. Nothing in the circumstances or in the narrative gives any color to the idea. But if *pouring* or *sprinkling* was the mode, as we suppose, then the whole account appears straight and consistent.

And this is more especially the case if we consider the fact that the apostle had just before informed them, that the *outpouring* of the Holy Spirit was an express fulfilment of the prophecy of the prophet Joel. His words are,

> For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day; but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will POUR OUT of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will POUR OUT in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Had there been a sufficient number of apostles to dip all this multitude the same day, had there been rivers of water there, what possible analogy or representation would there be between the *outpouring* of the Holy Spirit *on them,* and *dipping* them in the water? Was the Spirit applied *to them,* or were they applied *to the Spirit?* Was the Holy Ghost poured out upon them, or were they *dipped* into the Holy Ghost?

The Holy Spirit was *applied* to them; and we are compelled to believe that the water was also *applied* to them by pouring or sprinkling;

and that they were not applied to the water by dipping.

These considerations amount to a moral demonstration, that the mode of baptism practised by the apostles *was not immersion.*

XI. Philip Baptizing at Samaria.

This Philip was a deacon of the church at Jerusalem, chosen to that office with Stephen. (Acts vi. 5.) Stephen had not entered the ministry long before he was called upon to suffer martyrdom in the cause of his Lord. Philip's labors and success are thus described:

Acts viii. 5. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 8 And there was great joy in that city. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

There is nothing said here to show any thing particular about the mode. No doubt these were baptized in the common way, by

sprinkling and *pouring*, as nothing had taken place to make any alteration in the work.

Samaria was built upon a mountain, (as is well known and appears from John iv. 20, 1 Kings xvi. 24, I. vol. Josephus, p. 292, Philadelphia edition, by J. Gregg, 1829,) and consequently there could be no stream running through it, and, in order to get any water, the people had to dig their wells very deep. Now, if these converts were baptized in Samaria, they certainly were not *dipped*. No intimation is given that they left the city, nor any account of any river anywhere near, or change of clothes, or any circumstances whatever, to lead to the inference that these converts were dipped; nor would any person ever suppose that such a mode was practised, unless his mind was previously prejudiced, and he was determined to believe it, in opposition to all evidence.

XII. The Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

The eunuch described in this chapter was a person of high importance in the kingdom of Ethiopia, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion. He was now returning from Jeru-

salem, whither he had gone to worship at one of the public festivals, when Philip is directed to meet him, and to teach him what, with so much success, he had taught the Samaritans. He found the eunuch sitting in his chariot, reading the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 7, 8, *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter*, &c. Philip having asked him if he understood the prophet, the eunuch acknowledged his inability without assistance, and wished Philip to explain to him whether the prophet, in that place, spake of himself or of some other; and took him up into his chariot for that purpose; upon which we read,

Acts viii. 35. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered, and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

This passage has often been quoted as a

strong and conclusive proof of the correctness of the mode of dipping. And the going down into the water, and coming up out of the water, is quoted on all occasions, as one of the main pillars to that whole system; as if the going *down into the water* was the *baptism itself.* But a moment's consideration will show that the baptism was something which was *done after they went down* into the water, or "*to* the water," as it undoubtedly could as well be rendered. For *after* they went down into (or to) the water, it is said, "he baptized him." Now, how, or in what manner or mode, this baptism was performed, the Scripture does not say; it is perfectly silent; and we have as good a right to say that it was done by pouring or sprinkling, after they went into the water, as others have to assert roundly, without an atom of Scripture proof, that it was done by dipping.

The truth is, the Scripture is silent, in this place, as to the mode.

Now, it is indisputable, that if all the other baptisms were by *affusion* or *sprinkling*, (as we have proved,) then this would have been so too. But we have proof strong enough, independent of any thing we have said before,

to carry demonstration to every unprejudiced mind.

It seems the Ethiopian eunuch was reading in the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters of Isaiah, in which the prophet was describing the character and mission of Christ, and what he was to do and suffer, &c. And, in a part of this *very passage* which he was reading, it was predicted of Christ, among other things, that when he came "HE SHOULD SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS."

Now, when the eunuch was told who this person was of whom the prophet spake, that it was Jesus Christ, that he had actually come, and suffered all which the prophet had foretold, for the remission of sin; he very naturally asked, when they came to a certain water, "What does hinder me to be baptized, (*i.e.* sprinkled,) since this great Saviour has come, who was to *sprinkle many nations*, and I *am one of* those nations he was to sprinkle?" Philip told him, if he believed with all his heart, he might. He immediately professed his faith in Christ, and Philip took him down into the water, and baptized him. Probably they both stepped a little way into the water, (as it was a warm climate,) so that Philip

might more easily take up a little water in his hand, and *sprinkle him.* There was no other handy way to get to the water but to *go down into* it, or down to it, (as it might with equal propriety have been rendered,) and so, of course, they must *come up out of* the water, or come *up from it,* to get back again to the chariot. But can any person in his senses believe that Philip would take the eunuch down into the water and *dip* him, to fulfil a prophecy about *sprinkling?*

What is the whole amount of evidence to show that the eunuch was dipped? Why, he went with Philip *into** the water, and came *out* again, as a matter of course: this is *all.* No man of reason can say this evidence is conclusive, because nothing is said as to the mode. That he was dipped, is merely an *inference.* It is asked, Why did they go down into the water, unless the eunuch was immersed? Now, you perceive that this is only an inference; otherwise the fact would be stated in *precise* language. The case, there-

* Supposing this to be the true rendering, and not that "they went down to and came up from the water."

fore, is to be decided by probabilities. All know that a man may go into the water without going *under it*. Certainly Philip did not go under the water, although he went into it, as well as the eunuch. The most that can be claimed is, that there is a *probability* that dipping was used; but I maintain that even this is not the case. It is not probable that he was dipped, because—1st. The eunuch was reading *about sprinkling*, as expressive of the work of the Holy Ghost, which work was to be represented by the application of the water in baptism. 2d. No account is given of a river, or any body of water that was *sufficient* to dip a person; they were travelling along, and saw some water, and the presumption is, that it was no more than a very small stream, or watering-place, not sufficient to immerse a person.

Why, then, it will be asked, did they go down into the water at all? I reply, that whether they went to it, or into it, it was in order that Philip might more easily sprinkle water upon him, to *represent the work of the Holy Spirit*, and to fulfil the prophecy which he had just read.

XIII. The Baptism of Paul.

Saul, while breathing out threatenings against the disciples of Christ, is met in his career of persecution by the Lord himself, at whose exceeding glory, and powerful word, he falls prostrate and blind to the ground. Ananias, a devout disciple, is directed of God to go to him, and teach him what he is to do, and, for his encouragement in visiting the persecutor, Ananias is informed that Saul was praying, and that God had made him a chosen vessel to himself.

Acts ix. 8. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.

And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. See verses 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

Acts ix. 17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Chap. xxii. 14. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Chap.

ix. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Acts ix. 19. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.

There need be little said upon these passages, for there is nothing said about their going out of the house, to any river, or coming in again. Ananias only told him to "*arise*," or stand up, and be baptized; and then Ananias probably *sprinkled* or *poured* water upon his head.

No impartial person, in reading this account, but must conclude that in whatever mode the water was applied, it certainly was not done by dipping. Paul was in a house; he was weak from fasting, and could have had no previous intimation that he was to be baptized. In this condition Ananias met him; and when he received sight, Paul arose and was baptized. You observe that Paul did not leave the house, nor did he change his clothes; but he "arose," that is, stood up, and received the ordinance.

Now, according to the Baptists' notion, a person must be *buried* in the water; but so far was Paul from being buried, that he *stood up* when the water was applied, and conse-

quently could not be dipped. If you are willing, reader, to follow the example of this apostle, then you must receive the water in *an erect* posture, and not in a horizontal *one*. And, as we said before, dipping could not represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which he had just received, nor remission of sins by the *sprinkling* of the blood of Christ.

XIV. The Baptism of Cornelius and his Friends.

The next instance is a record of the first Gentiles that were baptized and received into the number of the disciples. Cornelius was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house. He is directed from Heaven to send for Peter the apostle, who should unfold to him the mysteries of the gospel of Christ. Cornelius, against the apostle's coming, called together his kinsmen and near friends, to hear the will of God, and requested Peter, when arrived, to declare all that God had commanded him. The apostle begins his discourse by testifying that he evidently saw that God respected not the persons of men, but everywhere, of every nation, he was accepted with God who feareth him and worketh

righteousness; and after having taught them the leading doctrines of the gospel, he concludes by repeating (in the first two verses below) what Christ had commissioned his apostles to do as their first and chief work, and the testimony of the prophets concerning him; after which we have the ordinance in question.

Acts x. 42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Now, this passage of Scripture is very plain, and needs little comment. As the Holy Ghost *fell on all them* which heard the word, how natural it was for Peter to say, "Can any man forbid water" (to be brought) and to

pour it out upon them upon whom had just been *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost?

You hear nothing of their going out of the house, to a river or pool; but it seems the water was *brought into* the house at the command of Peter, and that they were all baptized in the house, in the usual way, by *sprinkling* or *pouring*.

Here the only reason given by Peter why these should be baptized was, that the Holy Ghost had just been *poured out* upon them. But there could have been no analogy to the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, if they had been dipped. For, 1. They were not dipped into the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost was poured upon them. 2. They were not *applied* to the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost was applied to them.

XV. The Baptism of Lydia and her Household.

Paul, whose baptism we have just considered, is now become a most zealous apostle. He, with Silas, (and with them, probably, Luke, the writer of this history,) are sent to Macedonia, and to Philippi, a chief city of it,

to preach the gospel. Being arrived, they began their work in the following way and with the following success :

Acts xvi. 13. And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us:* whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

There is nothing very particular in this passage. Lydia, it seems, went out of the city to a prayer-meeting by the side of a river,—perhaps the river Strymon, which runs near the city of Philippi; and, as she was converted at this place, it is quite possible that she was also baptized there. This circumstance, if so, would not determine any thing about the *mode*. From the habits of the East, it is in the highest degree improbable that the apostle would lead females into the river and immerse them.

Here it must be observed that a prayer-meeting was held by the river-side. A ques-

tion naturally arises, why was such a place selected merely for the purpose of devotion? This assembly was doubtless composed of Jews, and therefore it is perfectly certain that they did not select the river-side for the convenience of administering baptism. What then?

It is alleged that John chose Enon and Jordan because much water was needed for dipping his converts: nay, they infer that dipping was the mode he practised, on account of the mention of much water. But here a river is selected for a religious meeting when baptism was not to be administered at all. How is this to be accounted for? Evidently, the fact of selecting the river's edge for divine worship, or a place having "much water" for the gathering of a multitude, affords no reason either for or against any mode of baptism.

XVI. The Baptism of the Philippian Jailer and Household.

Paul and Silas, having been cast into prison at Philippi, were delivered from their confinement at midnight, by the miraculous interposition of God. An earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, so that the doors of

it were opened, and the prisoners' bands loosed. The jailer, suspecting the escape of the prisoners, drew his sword to destroy himself, which Paul prevented, by assuring him the prisoners were all there. Upon this we read of his conversion and baptism.

Acts xvi. 29. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

As the jailer and his household were baptized *straightway*, or on the spot, it is in the highest degree improbable that they were immersed. No one, not determined to believe it, will suppose that there is any likelihood of accommodations for such a submersion in this prison. The water for washing their stripes would be amply sufficient for baptizing in the generally received mode.

That the jailer left his prisoners to go abroad to a stream is not supposable, and would contradict the narrative.

XVII. Paul Baptizing at Corinth.

Acts xviii. 4. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* Christ. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

A church being formed in this place, Paul afterwards writes them two epistles. In the first of these he laments the unhappy divisions that prevailed among them, in contending for different ministers, as if they had so many Saviours and had been baptized in their separate names. Upon which he reasons:

1 Cor. i. 13. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius: 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

Paul at Corinth, as at all other places, begins his work by testifying to the people "the things concerning Jesus Christ." He continued his labors at Corinth a year and six

months, in which time many, hearing his preaching, believed and were baptized. He himself baptized but few, and in this he afterward rejoiced; for, he adds, the first and chief work for which Christ sent him was, *not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.*

Here we are not told any thing about the *mode.*

XVIII. Disciples at Ephesus baptized.

This is the NINTH and LAST place, in the Acts of the Apostles, relative to our present inquiries. The question whether the persons, in this instance, were baptized *twice,* first with John's baptism, and now Christ's, does not concern us. As to the mode, there is no hint given. Were *immersion essential,* it would be strange that we should be thus left in the dark as to its being practised by the apostles.

Acts xix. 1. Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? and they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which

should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

XIX. Supposed Allusions to Baptism as a Burial.

Rom. vi. 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection. 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Col. ii. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

These passages are often quoted and much relied upon to establish the doctrine of immersion. An examination of the apostle's argument will show the danger of building so important a dogma upon a foundation which exists merely in a fancied resemblance of words to facts.

It is said that this being buried with Christ

in baptism can mean nothing but immersion, and therefore immersion is the only proper mode of baptism. As Christ was laid in the grave and covered up, say Baptists, so we lay a person in the water. And as he rose from the grave, so we raise the person out of the "watery grave."

But what resemblance has immersion to the burial of Christ? Does any one believe that Christ was put into a coffin, that he was let down into a grave, and covered up with earth? No! Every one knows that Christ *was not buried at all, in the modern sense of the word.* People are carried away by the mere sound of words.

Our Lord was laid, according to the custom of the Jews, in a niche or shelf, cut in a room hewn out of the solid rock, and doubtless above ground. Multitudes of such tombs may now be seen around Jerusalem. Says the Evangelist, (Matt. xxvii. 59–60,) "When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre."

After his resurrection, the women came, and,

finding the stone rolled away from the door of the sepulchre, "entering into the sepulchre (Mark xvi. 1–5) saw a young man sitting on the right side."

Where is the likeness to the "watery grave" upon which our brethren are so fond of dwelling? If they will note *the apostle's argument* in his Epistle to the Romans, it will not be very difficult to see that he has something very different from the mode of baptism in his eye, and that the allusion to "burial in baptism" has a higher significance.

Let the reader carefully consider the passage, and, with his eye upon the Bible, see if this is not its bearing.

The question which the apostle meets is this: "Does God's scheme of justifying men by faith lead them to continue in sin?" His answer is, "No! By the very profession which he makes in baptism he acknowledges his obligation to live a new life of holiness."

(V. 2.) How shall we, that are dead to sin, dead to its power and dominion, live any longer therein?

(V. 3.) So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, into a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death; we en-

tered into an engagement to fulfil the purpose for which he died, that is, the abolishing of sin.

(V. 4.) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; as Christ died and was buried, so we die to sin (see v. 2) and are buried to it; we utterly forsake it and renounce its dominion. That, like as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life. We die to sin and rise to a new life of holiness.

Does, then, justification by faith encourage us to live in sin?

No! In our profession, made at baptism, we have become dead to sin; and, being devoted to him by that baptism, we are bound to rise, as he rose, to a new life, a holy life, a life freed from the dominion of sin. Buried thus with him in baptism, we rise with him to walk in newness of life.

Still further to illustrate the idea, the apostle, in verse 5, uses the figure of seeds sown together; we and Christ united in this matter of death, and rising together; and, in verse 6, again, of our old nature being crucified with him.

The quotation from Colossians (chap. ii. 12)

has a similar purport. It is a favorite thought of the Apostle Paul. Thus (in Galatians ii. 20) he says, "I am crucified with Christ," meaning the same thing, and not that he was either planted, or buried, or crucified. It was the Christian's profession in baptism, not the mode of baptism, that occupied his attention. What can be more fallacious than to argue that no one can be baptized unless he is entirely immersed under water, from such passages as these?

XX. Occasional Mention of Baptism.

Eph. iv. 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

1 Cor. xv. 29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

To the Ephesians and Corinthians the apostle is here recommending peace and unity; that they should be all of one heart and mind, so that there be no schism in the body, as all were one in Christ: to urge which, he puts

them in mind of what they were taught at the first, that there was but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," and that "all were baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles."

There is nothing in these passages which affects what we have said before about the *mode*. They show, indeed, how wrong it is for baptized Christians to be divided about the mode of baptism. Various interpretations are given of the last passage; but, as they have no bearing on the mode, it is foreign to our purpose to consider them.

XXI. Baptism Illustrated by Events Recorded in the Old Testament.

These are the last passages we find in the New Testament which relate to the subject:

1 Cor. x. 1. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

1 Pet. iii. 20. The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but

the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The better to understand the Apostle Paul, in the first passage above, the reader would do well to peruse the place, in the Old Testament, to which he refers, viz. Exod. xiv. From this chapter, and references to it, we learn that the Israelites went down into the midst of the Red Sea; and the water divided, opening a passage for them, and forming a wall on each side, so that they passed over *on dry ground.* We also learn that the cloud hid the Israelites from their enemies; that it was bright and shining toward the former, while it was dark toward the latter. Now, upon the supposition that there is here a reference to the *ceremony* of baptism, or *the act* of baptism, it certainly *could not be by dipping.* They may have been *sprinkled* from the spray of the sea, which the wind scattered upon them, and also by the cloud which was over their heads.

Attempts have been made to strain this passage so as to make it seem something like *immersion.* But how could the Israelites be dipped, if they were marching upon *dry ground,* the sea forming a wall upon each

side, and the cloud flying *above their heads?* It is plain that they were not baptized by immersion.

If there is any allusion to the mode here, the Scriptures tell us *how* these Israelites were baptized. Psalm lxxvii. 16–20. "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid; the depths were troubled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad." Here was thunder, and lightning, and rain.

In point of fact, however, we think that there is here no reference to the mode of baptism, but to the fact that they were thus initiated into a profession of that religion which Moses was to teach them, and of which he was the representative.

As to Noah, there need be little said. If he could be baptized by any thing like dipping, when he was fast shut up in the ark, when it rained forty days and forty nights upon the earth, so might any of us be dipped, with as much propriety, when we are sitting in our houses, while the rain is *sprinkling* upon the roof. It does indeed look exactly like *sprinkling* and *pouring;* but not the least like dipping.

We think one occasion of the great difference of opinion upon this point is, that our brethren have totally mistaken the meaning and design of water-baptism. They have somehow imbibed a notion that there is great importance in the supposed burial of Christ, and so have thought themselves under obligation to celebrate and imitate *that*, by some solemn rite; as if his burial were of more importance than his birth, or his death, or his crucifixion. Now, a careful perusal of the scriptures we have quoted will show that the burial of Christ (as it is called) is of small importance in the Christian scheme. It is his *death*, and not the *burial*, which is the most important fact in the whole economy; and that is fitly represented by the Lord's Supper.

And water-baptism has its designs and uses also; and very important ones, too. 1. Water is designed to represent either the gospel, or the cleansing and purifying effect of the Holy Spirit. 2. *Much* water uniformly represents the gospel, or the holy effects of it. (See Ezekiel's vision of the river that proceeded out from the throne of God. Ezekiel xlvii.) Hence the spread and success of the

gospel is represented by a flowing stream. (See Isaiah lxvi.) A *small quantity* of water represents the effect of the Holy Spirit. Hence the continued using of the words *pour*, *sprinkle*, &c. &c.

The fallen children of men need two things to prepare them for heaven. The one is the forgiveness of sin, the other the sanctification of the heart by the Holy Ghost.

Two sacraments have been in the church to represent those two important things. Before the coming of Christ, circumcision and the passover, both attended with the sprinkling and pouring of blood, because they were typical of a coming Saviour. Since the coming of Christ, they are baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Of the Lord's Supper it is said expressly, "Ye do show forth the *Lord's death*," and, "This is the blood of the New Testament for the remission of sin."

Blood is omitted in both cases now, because we look back to a Saviour already come. That baptism means the outpouring of the Spirit, the apostle taught on the day of Pentecost: "This is that which is spoken by the prophet Joel." Acts ii. 16–18.

After a careful examination of every part

of the Scripture which had any bearing upon this subject, we have never been able to find any precept, warrant, or practice of Christ or his apostles which calls for immersion. Nor do any of the facts, or doctrines, or sacraments of the gospel teach any such practice.

Believing the doctrine that baptism must be by immersion to arise from a forgetfulness of the meaning of the ordinance, and believing it to be wholly *unscriptural*, we think it will not prevail; but, as the light increases, and the Scriptures come to be better understood, and the *real design* of these sacraments, the mistake will be seen and abandoned.

In conclusion, we would say to the reader, do not allow *the observations* contained in this pamphlet to form your opinions on a subject of so sacred a nature. Peruse the passages of Scripture again, omitting all the rest, and then form your sentiments, and govern your practice, by the pure unerring word, and that alone.

THE END.